THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Delhi Development Authority has reported that the construction of Vasant Kunj Shopping Mall is as per the prescribed land use and the auction purchasers are required to obtain necessary clearances from Statutory Authorities before execution of the project.

(c) As and when an encroachment is noticed, the concerned authorities are required to take action in accordance with the provisions of law.

Illegal trading of elephants from Assam

348. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of illegal trading of elephants from Assam;

(b) if so, the steps Government are taking to stop such illegal activity in Assam;

(c) whether it is a fact that some forest officers are also involved in this; and

(d) if so, the justification for it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) As per the information received from the State Government of Assam, there are no reports of illegal trade of elephants from Assam.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Shrinking of forest cover

349. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that according to the latest forest survey, the dense forest cover of the country shrunk by 26,245 sq. km. between 2001 and 2003;

(b) if so, whether efforts of afforestation proved to be futile since forest cover has come down drastically in these two years; and

(c) how Government propose to achieve the goal of increasing forest cover by 5 per cent by 2007?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) As per the "State of Forest Report (SFR)-2003" published by the Forest Survey of India (FSI), there has been a decrease of 26,245 sq. km. of dense forest cover as compared to "State of Forest Report (SFR)-2001", wherein it has also been stated that the real decrease in dense forest cover is 4,605 sq. km. only. The decrease of 21.640 sq. km. is due to interpretational corrections mostly in 1 to 25 ha. patches outside the recorded forests such as crops like cotton, sugarcane etc. which give reflectance similar to that of forest cover.

(b) No, Sir. As per the "State of Forest Report, 2003", the forest cover has increased from 675,538 sq. km. in 2001 to 678,333 sq. km. in 2003 and the forest and tree cover has increased form 757,010 sq. km. in 2001 to 778,229 sq. km. in 2003.

(c) The Tenth Five Year Plan has kept a monitorable target of increasing the forest and tree cover to 25 per cent by 2007 and 33 per cent by 2012. The measures taken to increase the forest and tree cover in the country are:—

(i) Legal measures like Indian Forest Act, 1927, Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and the rules, guidelines thereof.

(ii) Management measures like working of forests according to approved Working Plans; Establishment of Forest Development Agencies and Implementation of Joint Forest Management schemes; and

(iii) Financial measures like providing assistance to the State/Union Territories under Centrally Sponsored Schemes and externally aided projects.

(a) Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme called 'Intergrated Forest Protection Scheme' , in Operation since 2002-03, funds are provided to State and Union territories primarily for strengthening of infrastructure for protection of forests from illicit fellings, fires, encroachments etc.

(b) The Ministry of Environments and Forests is implementing " National Afforestation Programme " (NAP) Scheme for regeneration of degraded forests and adjoining forest lands during Tenth Five Year Plan.

(iv) A network of protected areas has been established.

Share In Trade of processing of Fruits and Vegetables

350. SHRI R.K. ANAND : Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India is one of the largest producer of fruits and vegetables, but its share in the global trade of processed fruits and vegetables is less than 1 per cent; and

(b) whether it is also a fact that only 0.8 per cent of the horticulture product is processed in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) India is second largest producer of fruits and vegetables in the world. However India's exports of agricultural and food products are estimated to constitute about 1.6 per cent of total global trade.

(b) Level of processing of fruits and vegetables in the country is estimated at 1.4 per cent in the organized sector and 0.8 per cent in the unorganized sector.

Plan for increasing capacity of cold storage and food processing units

351. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have prepared any action plan to increase the capacity of existing cold storage and food processing units in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of such units in the States, as on date and the details of the units Government propose to set up during 2005-06 in the country, State-wise; and

(d) the funds allocated for the purpose during the current financial year?